

above embodiments. In particular, it is contemplated that the electronic accessory device is inoperable without the electronic host device. The process continues at **504**, which can involve forming a communication channel between the host device and the accessory device. The communication channel can be formed subsequent to the host device being captured by and secured within a docking port associated with the accessory device, such as at **502**. In one embodiment, the communication channel can be formed by completion of a mating between electrical contacts at an interface between the host device and the accessory device. In one embodiment, the communication channel can be of a wireless nature. In yet another embodiment, the communication channel can be a mix of wired communication and wireless communication. In any case, once the communication channel has been established, the host device can utilize resources provided by the accessory device. This can take place at **506**, which can involve controlling an operation of the accessory device by the host device using the communication channel. This can involve, for example, the host device controlling a display screen on the accessory device. Again, it is contemplated that the accessory device is inoperable until the communication channel is formed.

[0034] FIG. 6 is a block diagram of an electronic device **600** suitable for use with the described embodiments. The electronic device **600** illustrates circuitry of a representative computing device. The electronic device **600** includes a processor **602** that pertains to a microprocessor or controller for controlling the overall operation of the electronic device **600**. The electronic device **600** stores media data pertaining to media items in a file system **604** and a cache **606**. The file system **604** is, typically, a semiconductor memory, cloud storage, or storage disks or hard drives. The file system **604** typically provides high capacity storage capability for the electronic device **600**. However, since the access time to the file system **1004** is relatively slow, the electronic device **600** can also include a cache **606**. The cache **606** is, for example, Random-Access Memory (RAM) provided by semiconductor memory. The relative access time to the cache **606** is substantially shorter than for the file system **604**. However, the cache **606** does not have the large storage capacity of the file system **604**. Further, the file system **604**, when active, consumes more power than does the cache **606**. The power consumption is often a concern when the electronic device **600** is a portable media device that is powered by a battery **624**. The electronic device **600** can also include a RAM **620** and a Read-Only Memory (ROM) **622**. The ROM **622** can store programs, utilities or processes to be executed in a non-volatile manner. The RAM **620** provides volatile data storage, such as for the cache **606**.

[0035] The electronic device **600** also includes a user input device **608** that allows a user of the electronic device **600** to interact with the electronic device **600**. For example, the user input device **608** can take a variety of forms, such as a button, keypad, dial, touch screen, audio input interface, visual/image capture input interface, input in the form of sensor data, etc. Still further, the electronic device **600** includes a display **610** (screen display) that can be controlled by the processor **602** to display information to the user. A data bus **616** can facilitate data transfer between at least the file system **604**, the cache **606**, the processor **602**, and the CODEC **613**.

[0036] In one embodiment, the electronic device **600** serves to store a plurality of media items (e.g., songs,

podcasts, etc.) in the file system **604**. When a user desires to have the electronic device play a particular media item, a list of available media items is displayed on the display **610**. Then, using the user input device **608**, a user can select one of the available media items. The processor **602**, upon receiving a selection of a particular media item, supplies the media data (e.g., audio file) for the particular media item to a coder/decoder (CODEC) **613**. The CODEC **613** then produces analog output signals for a speaker **614**. The speaker **614** can be a speaker internal to the electronic device **600** or external to the electronic device **600**. For example, headphones or earphones that connect to the electronic device **600** would be considered an external speaker.

[0037] The electronic device **600** also includes a network/bus interface **611** that couples to a data link **612**. The data link **612** allows the electronic device **600** to couple to a host computer or to accessory devices. The data link **612** can be provided over a wired connection or a wireless connection. In the case of a wireless connection, the network/bus interface **611** can include a wireless transceiver. The media items (media assets) can pertain to one or more different types of media content. In one embodiment, the media items are audio tracks (e.g., songs, audio books, and podcasts). In another embodiment, the media items are images (e.g., photos). However, in other embodiments, the media items can be any combination of audio, graphical or visual content. Sensor **626** can take the form of circuitry for detecting any number of stimuli. For example, sensor **626** can include a Hall Effect sensor responsive to external magnetic field, an audio sensor, a light sensor such as a photometer, and so on.

[0038] Although the foregoing disclosure has been described in detail by way of illustration and example for purposes of clarity and understanding, it will be recognized that the above described disclosure may be embodied in numerous other specific variations and embodiments without departing from the spirit or essential characteristics of the disclosure. Certain changes and modifications may be practiced, and it is understood that the disclosure is not to be limited by the foregoing details, but rather is to be defined by the scope of the appended claims.

1. An electronic accessory device, comprising:
an operational component that provides an output to a user;
a housing carrying the operational component, the housing having a recess; and
a control interface coupled to the operational component and configured to receive a control signal from an electronic host device when the electronic host device is positioned within the recess and coupled to the control interface, wherein the electronic accessory device is inoperable without the electronic host device being coupled to the control interface.
2. The electronic accessory device as recited in claim 1, wherein the operational component is solely controlled by the electronic host device.
3. The electronic accessory device as recited in claim 2, wherein the electronic host device uses the control interface to pass the control signal to the operational component.
4. The electronic accessory device as recited in claim 3, wherein the operational component comprises an accessory display configured to present visual content.
5. The electronic accessory device as recited in claim 4, wherein the electronic host device comprises an input device configured to detect a touch event.